

GREAT BRITAIN TAKES COMMAND

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part in all its activities. Tchosaia, who no longer did any physical work, spent much of his time in my house chatting over the kava bowl. He was a man with "mana", feared and respected on the island. He had a keen and independent mind, a sense of humor, and a naturally dignified chiefly manner. In a matter involving precedence he was always accorded highest rank. 634
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As a young man, Tchosaia spent much time traveling, both in Fiji and in Tonga and living at the high chief's court at Lakemba. He learned to speak the Mbauan and the Tongan languages. According to the old ceremony for preparing kava, the kava root was chewed by noble youths before being placed in the kava bowl and mixed with water. Kava chewing has been forbidden, and today the root is either pounded on a stone slab with a stone hammer or crushed in a wooden mortar with an iron pestle. Formerly Tchosaia was one of the noble youths who chewed kava for the high chief. When we knew him he still had a perfect set of strong white teeth which he attributed to kava chewing. At Lakemba he learned the complicated court etiquette and court phraseology used only when addressing the high chief and nobles of highest rank in Lakemba. Instead of the ordinary words, extravagantly flattering or descriptive metaphors are used for the parts of the body, the actions, and the relationships of nobles. For instance, a chief's eye is called "brightness", his ear "bird's wing", his body "ivory skin", and head "place above". A chief's house, always centrally located, is the "center of the town". When a chief speaks he "makes sound", when he dies he "falls" or "sleeps".²⁰ 644
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Tchosaia's experience and training at the chief's court set him apart from the other Kambarans, who considered him the best authority on olden times, on the traditions and customs of the nobles, and on Lauan folklore. He knew from memory 159

²⁰ A. M. Hocart, "The Lau Islands, Fiji," Bishop Museum, Bulletin 62, Honolulu, 1929, pp. 47-48.